AHG file

Handle Via
TALENT-KEYHOLE
Control System Only

TOP SECRET

AHG-D-2

21 January 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Ad Hoc Group on Security Handling of Satellite Reconnaissance Materials

SUBJECT: Procedures for Decontrol and Downgrading of T-KH Materials

Attached for your information and for discussion at a meeting of the Ad Hoc Group scheduled for 1000 hours, 27 January, in [redacted] office, is a redraft of "Procedures for Decontrol and Downgrading of T-KH Materials." You have received copies of [redacted] first contribution for Tab A. He hopes to have some additional information ready for us on the 27th. The NPIC contribution should also be available then. At this juncture it is planned to use a memorandum prepared by [redacted] as Tab C.

25X1A

25X1A

25X1A

25X1A

[redacted]

6 Jan 67

25X1A

[redacted]

Executive Secretary
Ad Hoc Group, COMOR

Attachment: Draft Report
on above subject

Copies 1,2 State TCO for Mr. Baraz
3,4 DIA TCO for [redacted]
25X1A 5,6 NPIC for Maj [redacted]
7,8 ORR TCO for [redacted]
9 NRO TCO for [redacted]
10-20 SA/(COMOR)/DDS&T

[redacted] note
per [redacted] dated 6 Feb 67

25X1

[redacted]

Copy 12 of 20

NRO
review(s)
completed.

25X1

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

TOP SECRET

Handle Via
TALENT-KEYHOLE
Control System Only

MEMORANDUM FOR: United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Procedures for Decontrol and Downgrading of T-KH Materials

1. On 7 July 1966 the Director of Central Intelligence appointed an ad hoc group to study the problems involved in decontrol and downgrading T-KH material. This has been done with the emphasis on those factors bearing on measures which would increase the utility and minimize the cost and risk of decontrol.

2. The ad hoc committee has received a series of briefings bearing directly on and pertinent to problems involved in decontrol and downgrading of the material now in or designated for the T-KH compartment. The briefings received are summarized below under the following headings:

a. Need for decontrol and downgrading in certain fields;

b. The physical problem of decontrol;

c. Security implications of release;

d. Technological security factors:

e. Rationalization for protection based on study of the Soviet reconnaissance program.

25X1

Need for Decontrol and Downgrading in Certain Fields

3. Satellite photography is inherently an efficient and relatively inexpensive source of information for the construction of maps and the conduct of a wide variety of studies which relate to the physical environment of the world. The Office of the U.S. Army Chief of Engineers has been conducting studies in the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment and has concluded that if it were possible to downgrade substantial quantities of satellite photography, it would be possible to undertake studies of the earth's environment on a much broader scale. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has come to the same conclusion independently and is considering a large scale program for the acquisition of satellite photography on an unclassified basis to be used for such studies.

4. The principal point to be made at this juncture is that as our capability to photograph the earth develops, an ever-increasing number of users of photography will be found. Such offices as that of the U.S. Army Chief of Engineers have made extensive use of sanitized T-KH photography to produce maps and charts at the SECRET and CONFIDENTIAL levels, outside of the compartment. As indicated by the interest of many other agencies of the U.S. Government in the Gemini photography, however, there are many other studies of the earth to which photography will be a major contributor. The important point was to recognize this problem and to place

25X1

it in context. The next section will deal with the physical problem of decontrol of photography from the NRP. Subsequent sections will study some of the problems of release and reasons for control of the technology to deny the Soviets information which we have reason to believe would be extremely valuable to them.

5. The NRO has agreements with NASA designed to protect the technology involved in achieving the higher resolutions already obtained under the National Reconnaissance Program. On the basis of the photography already acquired by NASA in the Gemini program, however, and the photography NASA is likely to acquire on an unclassified basis in the Apollo program, the possibility of conducting a large scale photographic program from orbiting satellites will be common knowledge. We must assume that it is intended to use the product in the national interest. Any qualified scientist or technician in the United States or abroad should be able to extrapolate from this knowledge to deduce that it is possible to acquire better quality photography than that which has been made public. On the other hand, they would still be unable to deduce the full extent of the solution to technical problems involving resolution and would not be able to deduce the operational effectiveness and thus the capability of the National Reconnaissance Program as a whole. As will be mentioned later, these facts could be deduced only from access to the actual photography itself.

25X1

The Physical Problem of Decontrol

6. The problem of downgrading previously acquired photography now in the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment is large and complex. Over a million feet of original satellite photographic film has been collected and many duplicates have been made. In the normal course of events, each frame of photography released from a compartment would have to be reclassified. This process is costly in terms of time, money, and administration. The actual cost, according to what route is followed, is shown at Tabs A and B.

7. If the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment were abolished, it might be possible to leave the original classification on the photography until it was actually used, at which time the old classification could be removed and the new classification applied. This would reduce the cost of reclassification considerably. Alternatively, if release of a considerable volume of photography is the problem, a new compartment could be established to furnish protection to some of the present satellite photography. In such a case, only the photography deemed to require this protection would need to be reclassified. The remainder of the photography could be considered automatically downgraded.

8. Another alternative would be to leave previously acquired photography in the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment but to decide that at some specific date new photography of a given type would receive a lower classification and be handled outside of the TALENT-KEYHOLE system. This would avoid the problem of wholesale reclassification of previously acquired photography, but since in performing photographic analysis of new photography it would be necessary to refer to old photography, it would be necessary to reclassify the old photography used for comparative purposes whenever such an occasion arose.

25X1

9. Yet another alternative available would be to retain the actual satellite photography, past and future, in the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment but to authorize the publication of photographic interpretation reports based on this photography at a lower classification. Through a revision of the Sanitization Manual, it should be possible to use selected photography for illustrative purposes without revealing technical characteristics of the satellite reconnaissance system which still require protection.

Security Implications of Release

10. The principal security factor inherent in release of the results of photographic reconnaissance from T-KH is that essentially the United States Government is admitting officially, at the ultimate classification decided upon, that the United States is conducting a satellite reconnaissance program over the Soviet bloc and Communist China. It seems clear to us that there would be little point in removing material from the TALENT-KEYHOLE system unless its new classification were at least SECRET or below. Otherwise, there would be too small a gain in the increased utility of the material. On the other hand, we have been advised in the strongest terms by the responsible security officers /Tab C/ that the SECRET classification will provide relatively little true security to the fact of the U.S. reconnaissance program.

25X1

Technological Security Factors

11. The main concern of the BYEMAN and the KEYHOLE security systems, insofar as they pertain to photographic satellite reconnaissance, has been to protect operational details which could permit identification and sizing of the reconnaissance programs. Certain pieces of technical information are still believed to be unique to the United States. In this latter category, the main technological factors which contribute to the success of the U.S. program, and which we believe the Soviets have not yet duplicated, are the successful fabrication of the large scale optics involved in some of the U.S. systems and the quantity production of very high quality thin base film. Representatives of the NRO reported to us that they believe that the Soviet Union could make important deductions concerning both of these points if a single frame of original photography were to fall into their hands or if they were to obtain a mosaic constructed of large pieces of the photography. A mosaic made up of many small pieces, while not precluding damaging deductions, would complicate the problem of making those deductions. In this context those who briefed us concerning the Soviet satellite reconnaissance system were

NRO
25X1
25X1D
25X1D
25X1

25X1 [redacted] but that they would be

NRO severely handicapped in coming to firm conclusions concerning the effectiveness of our program if they do not have any of our original photography.

Rationalization for Protection Based on Study of Soviet Reconnaissance Program

12. It has been argued that since the Soviet Union is conducting its own satellite reconnaissance program with both a search and a high resolution pointing system, it must be sufficiently aware of our capabilities in satellite reconnaissance to reduce the need to maintain the security compartment to protect the details concerning results of the U.S. reconnaissance program. This rationalization has been examined in the context of our knowledge of the Soviet reconnaissance program and the following deductions appear to us to dictate caution in imputing too much knowledge to the Soviets:

25X1D [redacted]

25X1

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79B01709A002000050018-7

25X1D

[redacted]

Conclusions

14. On the basis of the considerations outlined above, we conclude that:

a. The photographic product of the [redacted] cameras would reveal technical information of value to the Soviet Union if it were to fall into Soviet hands. 25X1

b. The photographic product of the [redacted] cameras, 25X1

25X1 [redacted] should have maximum protection on two scores:

(1) Possession of photography would permit the Soviets to evaluate our capabilities and take countermeasures.

(2) In addition to the Soviet Union there are other countries [redacted] which might make political capital out of the possession 25X1 25X1

[redacted]

of photography or the fact that the United States boasted of its ability in this field.

c. There are large areas of the world for which we could use satellite photography at the SECRET level or even on an unclassified basis without creating an adverse reaction.

d. If the United States Government is willing to admit at the SECRET level that it is engaged in a satellite reconnaissance program, it should be possible to authorize the production of photo interpretation reports at the SECRET level; however,

(1) Photography from the primary cameras would not be released; and

(2) The reports would not reveal critical technical information concerning the reconnaissance system that collected the photography.

(3) It should be possible to release photography collected by the [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted] cameras at SECRET.

e. If photo interpretation reports based on photography are released at the SECRET level and if the photographic product of the [redacted] cameras is made available 25X1

 [redacted] 25X1

at the same level, wide use could be made of information and photography that is now closely held.

f. There would be both a decrease and an increase in security risk if the fact of overhead reconnaissance is classified SECRET. In our estimation, however, if the course of action outlined in e above is followed, this risk could be minimized. Recognition of the fact that satellite photography makes a major contribution to all-source reports will increase the confidence factor. If this revelation is properly controlled, it will eliminate irresponsible speculation as to source. Furthermore, if photography from [redacted] NRO 25X1 25X1 NRO [redacted] is made available for appropriate use by the U.S. Government, it will not only serve as a useful backup to intelligence but will reduce speculation as to the existence of a satellite photo capability.